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at the moment, and perhaps it was from a lack of material with which to round out an adequate poem that Spenser had recourse to borrowings more strikingly inappropriate than now. Such an explanation goes far towards accounting for the forced, conventional tone evident all through *Astrophel*.

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THE *y-i* OF *employons-emploie, paye-paie*
To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—I notice, in the reviews of Romance language text-books appearing latterly in *Modern Language Notes*, a much to be approved tendency towards constructive criticism. This advent, in the field in question, of what might be called "educational research" must meet with the approval of all who read for specific information and not for air-drawn generalities. Mr. Spiers' short review, in the April issue, of Mr. Snow's *Fundamentals of French Grammar* is an example of how this method can be applied even in the case of short notices. Specific in his references, constructive in his criticism, he makes it profitable perhaps to take issue with him in case you disagree.

One of the criticisms he makes in his review is concerned with the terminology used by Mr. Snow in his treatment of verbs like *employer* and *payer*. "The appearance," he says, "now of *y*, now of *i* in the various form of *croire, employer, asseoir*, etc., Mr. Snow explains under the heading of 'Orthographic Conventions.' . . . This can hardly be an 'orthographic' convention, since Mr. Snow's own phonetic transcription shows a different pronunciation for *y* and *i* in *employons* and *emploient*. More than this, it is well to remember that where two spellings are allowed, *e. g.*, *paye* and *paie*, two pronunciations certainly exist in modern speech (however close the connection, if any, may be between the written and the spoken forms)."

A question of pedagogical method is here involved. It is true that in the case of *paye* and *paie* two pronunciations exist. According to

Michaelis and Passy's *Dictionnaire phonétique* (p. 315, A, 2 and 4), there are even three pronunciations of the word. The point at issue, however, is whether or not the two or three pronunciations are *all* symbolized by *either* of the two spellings; and this I believe to be the case. But even if the two or three pronunciations are not all symbolized by either of the two spellings, in order to be pedagogically sound the writer of an elementary grammar must make his choice and state his rule accordingly. Now it so happens that the pronunciation of *paye* or *paie* with a final *y*-sound (*y* of *yeux*) may be regarded as the normal one. This may also be said of the pronunciation of *emploient*.¹ In this normal pronunciation, therefore, it matters not whether the letter in the class of words here concerned be a *y* or an *i* (*employons* or *emploient*; *paye* or *paie*) the pronunciation remains the same; and hence the use of the term "orthographic" is not only justified by the facts, but is made pedagogically imperative.

Mr. Snow, however, has chosen, partly perhaps for pedagogical reasons (note the greater ease of utterance), the pronunciation of *emploient* and *payent* in which the final *y*-sound is not heard. And here he may be said to be inconsistent. But the term "orthographic" applied to the linguistic phenomena in question does not, it seems to me, *necessarily* involve an inconsistency. The facts would even seem to make the use of the term almost compulsory.

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ROSTAND AND ERASMUS

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—I venture to call attention to a passage in the *Colloquia* of Erasmus, which, so far as I know, has not been brought into connection with Rostand's famous *tour de force* on Cyrano de Bergerac's nose.

In the first place, it is of course well known that the Cyrano of flesh and blood had nothing

¹ Cf. Michaelis and Passy, *Dictionnaire phonétique*, p. 315.